

Talented Lady Mountaineers open season Saturday at St. Stephens

By GARY STEWART
Sports Editor

With just one player gone from last year's team which dominated the Southwestern 2A/3A Conference, Kings Mountain's women's soccer team will open what has the potential to be its best season ever Saturday in the St. Stephens Jamboree at Henry Fork Park in Hickory.

Kelli Bolt, an All-Conference standout and two-time MVP of the Gazette Cup Tournament, graduated but veteran coach Dan Potter has a host of returning players that put up some incredible statistics on offense while also going through the 10-game SWC schedule without surrendering a point.

Plus, two outstanding players who missed last year due to ACL tears, are back.

The Lady Mountaineers' top returning player is junior scoring whiz Ramey

Kerns, who became Kings Mountain's first sophomore All-State player last year. She scored an unbelievable

50 goals, breaking the previous record of 33 set by East Carolina University standout Blair Heffner.

Potter welcomes the return of junior Megan Reynolds, who was all-conference as a freshman but tore her ACL in the first game of the season last year. He marvels at the potential 1-2 punch Reynolds and Kerns can bring to the table this season.

"Reynolds will make a big difference," Potter says. "Hopefully we can get those two working well together and shore up a defense that is already good and we can go a long way."



Coach Dan Potter

Also returning to the team is senior Jordan Doty, who tore her ACL her sophomore year and rehabilitated it while playing softball last spring.

"We're glad to have her back," Potter said. "She's a super competitor."

Several other players that made all-star teams last spring also return.

Senior Ashley Witherpoon was second on the team in scoring and made the All-Conference and All-Regional teams. So did Alex Edwards, a senior who scored 20 goals, and junior Megan Loflin.

All-Conference standout Heather Stevens returns as goalkeeper. She recorded 16 shutouts last year.

Mallory Mansfield, Brooke Hayes, Chelsey Champion and Connor Blalock also return.

Several other candidates are competing for starting positions, but it will be tough to move any of these ladies out. Potter said many

freshmen who otherwise would be kept on varsity may be moved to JVs for experience.

"We may not have any freshmen on varsity because we have so many starters returning," Potter said. "I don't want to keep freshmen if they're not going to play. They need to be on JV."

While most teams' goal going into a season is to win the conference championship, that may not be enough for the Lady Mountaineers this season. They want to not only do that, but to also go very deep in the

state playoffs and possibly win the state 3A championship.

To better prepare his team for such a journey, Potter has scheduled numerous state powers for non-conference games. The Lady Mountaineers' very first game in the St. Stephens Jamboree will be at 10:40 a.m. against mountain power T.C. Roberson, a perennial top ten team. The KM ladies play East Lincoln at 1 p.m. and St. Stephens at 3:20.

"We should have a fantastic team," Potter predicts. "So we have added several

challenges in non-conference that we didn't have last year." Some of the other traditional powers on the schedule are Hickory, Clover, SC, Asheville and Porter Ridge.

"Obviously, we expect to repeat as conference champions," Potter said. "We're looking to win the Gazette Cup again for the seventh year straight."

"But we have some other goals, too. I hope they don't want to just win the conference. I hope we will go farther than any other team we've ever had. We have the talent to go a long way."

Kings Mountain High spring sports schedules:

SOFTBALL FEBRUARY

21 - at Freedom (scrimmage); 28 - at KM YMCA (teams and times TBA).

MARCH

9 - at Ashbrook 5 p.m.; 10 - at East Gaston 5 p.m.; 13 - East Gaston 5 p.m.; 19 - at Chase 4:30; 24 - Shelby 4:30; 27 - East Rutherford 4:30; 31 - at RS Central 5 p.m.

APRIL

3 - at Burns 4:30; 4 - Crest and TC Roberson at KMHS, 10 a.m., 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.; 7 - Chase 5 p.m.; 9 - at Shelby 5 p.m.; 14 - at South Caldwell Tournament; 21 - at East Rutherford 5 p.m.; 23 - RS Central 5 p.m.; 28 - Burns 5 p.m.; 30 - at Chase 5 p.m.

MAY

5 - Shelby 5 p.m.; 8 - East Rutherford 5 p.m.; 12 - at RS Central 5 p.m.; 15 - at Burns 5 p.m.; 19-29 - State playoffs.

WOMEN'S SOCCER FEBRUARY

21 - St. Stephens, TC Roberson, and East Lincoln at Jamboree, Henry Fork Park, Hickory, TBA.

MARCH

3-7 - at Gazette Cup Tournament at Gastonia Ashley, TBA; 9 - Polk County, 5 and 6:30 p.m.; 12 - at Statesville, 5 and 6:30; 13 - Crest 6 p.m. (varsity only); 16 - at Clover, 5 and 7 p.m. 19 - E. Lincoln 5 and 6:30; 23 - Piedmont 5 and 6:30; 27 - Grace Academy 6 p.m. (varsity only); 30 - at Chase 6 p.m.

APRIL

1 - Shelby 6 p.m. (varsity only); 3 - at Asheville 5

and 6:30; 6 - E. Rutherford 5 and 6:30; 8 - at RS Central 6 p.m. (varsity only); 9 - at Porter Ridge 5 and 6:30; 20 - at Burns 6 p.m. (varsity only); 22 - Chase 6 p.m. (varsity only); 23 - Forestview 5 and 6:30; 27 - at Shelby 6 p.m. (varsity only); 29 - at East Rutherford 5 and 6:30.

MAY

2 - at Hickory (12 and 2 p.m.); 4 - RS Central 6 p.m.; 6 - Burns 6 p.m. (Senior Night). 13 - State playoffs begin.

VARSITY BASEBALL FEBRUARY

24 - at East Gaston (scrimmage) 5 p.m.; 27 - Scrimmage at KMHS 4 p.m. - West Lincoln-KM at 4 p.m., Weddington-West Lincoln at 5:30 p.m., and Weddington-KM at 7 p.m.

MARCH

3 - East Gaston 4:30 (JV/varsity DH); 10 - Forestview 4:30; 11 - at West Lincoln 4 p.m. (JV/varsity DH); 13 - at Crest 6 p.m.; 17 - at Chase 7 p.m.; 18 - S. Point 6 p.m.; 20 - Shelby 7 p.m.; 24 - East Rutherford 7 p.m.; 27 - at RS Central 7 p.m.; 31 - at Burns 7 p.m.

APRIL

3 - Chase 7 p.m.; 7 - at Shelby 7 p.m. 9 - at E. Rutherford 7 p.m. 10 - Crest 6 p.m.; 13-17 - at Shelby Easter Tournament (TBA); 21 - RS Central 7 p.m.; 24 - Burns 7 p.m.; 28 - at Chase 7 p.m.

MAY

1 - Shelby 7 p.m.; 5 - E. Rutherford 7 p.m.; 8 - at RS Central 7 p.m.; 11 - at Burns 7 p.m.; 15-June 6 - State playoffs.

Duckpin Bowling

League scores from Mountain Lanes:

February 3
Buckshot Bowlers 6, Philczyk 2

Buckshot - Bob Paramore 128 game, 339 set; Philczyk - Zeke Rybczyk 129 game, 373 set.

Ducks R Us 6, No Ideas 2

Ducks - Greg Evans 146 game, 404 series; No Ideas - Ed Philbeck 116 game, 323 set.

February 5

Lucky Ducks 6, Alley Cats 2

Ducks - Greg Evans 189 game, 455 set; Cats - Allen Myes 136 game, 346 set. Mighty Ducks 6, Duck Masters 2

MD - Bob Paramore 131 game, 343 set; DM - Zeke Rybczyk 127 game, 327 set.

February 10

Philczyk 6, No Ideas 2

Philczyk - Jessie Wright 121 game, 338 set; Philczyk - Gail Rybczyk 114 game, 314 set.

Ducks R Us 5, Buckshot Bowlers 3

Ducks - Greg Evans 136 game, 355 set; Buckshot - Bob Paramore 111 game, 318 set.

February 12

Alley Cats 8, Duck Masters 0

Cats - Allen Myes 126 game, 345 series; Masters - Zeke Rybczyk 115 game, Tommy Barrett 320 series. Lucky Ducks 6, Mighty Ducks 2

LD - Greg Evans 170 game, 431 set; MD - Ed Philbeck 132 game, Bob Paramore 321 set.

Mountaineer softball team to play in Freedom scrimmage

By GARY STEWART
Sports Editor

Kings Mountain High's women's softball team officially opened pre-season practice Monday and will see action for the first time



Coach Craig Short

Saturday in the Freedom Multi-Team Scrimmage at Catawba Meadows Park in Morganton.

The Lady Mountaineers will play at 11:15 a.m., 12:45 p.m. and 3 p.m. against Reagan, McDowell and Weddington, respectively.

Second-year coach Craig

Short welcomed over 20 prospects for the first official practice Monday afternoon. For the past three weeks the coaches have been working out players in groups of eight for three days a week. Last Friday was "freshman day" and Short said a good group of ninth graders took part.

Kings Mountain will host its own Multi-Team Scrimmage on Saturday, Feb. 28 at the YMCA. Thirteen area high school teams will participate.

The Lady Mountaineers have 12 players returning from last year's team which finished 15-9 overall and third place in the Southwestern 2A/3A Conference. Returning starters include catcher Hayley Hoyle, second baseman Kelisha Goodson, Megan Hoyle, Taylor

Farris and sophomore pitcher Lea Zwick.

Freshman Shea Cogdill will share pitching duties with Zwick.

"I think we can be really good on defense, and good on offense," said Short. "If we have an Achilles Heel it may be pitching - not that we're not good there but we're so young."

"We have a good nucleus coming back," he added. "The conference will be tough. There are a lot of good teams like East Rutherford, Chase and R-S Central. Coach (Don) Sweezy (who assisted Suzanne Grayson with KM's back-to-back state championship teams) has taken over at Burns and they will be a lot better."

Like every team, Short says the Lady Mountaineers' goal is to win the conference championship, "but if we fall short of that we want to finish ahead of R-S Central and Burns and be in the state playoffs. We have a situation where we may struggle at times, but when we get in the conference we want to be at the top of our game." Kings Mountain's regular season begins on March 9 at Ashbrook. The Mountaineers' first home game is March 13 against East Gaston. Short coached the Warriors to their best season ever in 2007. He took over as head coach at KMHS in 2008.

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